



## **Purpose of this document**

The purpose of this information is to help you communicate with...

- your customers
- local leaders
- local media
- your staff
- your directors
- your members or stockholders

...in a clear and effective manner, about some of the issues that will significantly affect them.

The issues are complicated and intertwine regulatory and technological matters; things that customers often don't care about.

What customers do care about is their ability to use the full range of communications services that are priced fairly. Some customers might also care about the strength and sustainability of their rural community.

The communication pieces in this packet, attempt to share the messages in clear, plain language.

## **The topics addressed**

1. Customers and regulators want to see everyone have broadband service. That takes continued investment in communications infrastructure – to build it and maintain it.

As we know, the state and federal regulations are still using old models to fund communications in non-urban areas. We need the public to understand that some form of Universal Service needs to stay in place for our service areas AND that program needs to allow for investment in the broadband as well as traditional voice. We want them to understand it, so they can communicate with legislators and regulators about the importance to THEM, not us as providers.

2. Wireless services are a staple in customers' lives. We need to connect the dots for customers and regulators that a wireless call is not exclusively carried through the air.

It needs landline based facilities connected to the wireless towers to transport most traffic. Those facilities need to be built and maintained. Funding models that use long distance carriers to support non-urban areas have been outdated by wireless services and Internet based communications. New, sustainable funding options are needed to support the high costs seen by rural providers.

3. Rural providers advocate for rural America and rural customers because we know the value rural industries and communities provide to the country at large.

This is not about our business changing. It is about the long term sustainability of Universal Service regardless of how that is defined. In many cases we are one of the largest economic development and community proponents in our areas. We voice these concerns because we see the overall impact of these issues for rural businesses and residents.

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